



January 2010



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Department Spotlight

Fire Chief, Richard Rochon, and department for evolving into a paramedic (advanced life support) department.

Sandy Collins and Health Department staff for organizing swine flu H1N1 vaccination effort.

Kaari Tari and Town Clerk staff for election preparation and census coordination.

Chip Barrett and all Public Works staff for their expertise in snow removal.

Kevin Landry, Highway, for handling the job of 2 mechanics for the past year.

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www.westfordma.gov
for current news and
information.

Dear Westford Residents,

Happy New Year to all, and I hope 2010 is filled with good health and happiness for all of us!

The Board of Selectmen recently awarded the contracts for the construction of the Stepinski well, upgrade of the Cote well, installation of new water transmission lines, and construction of a new treatment plant facility. All paperwork has been submitted to the state, and we have been awarded 2% financing through Economic Stimulus funds. We are awaiting notification if we will receive principal forgiveness for this project. In addition, I am pleased to report that Maine Drilling and Blasting has recently agreed to contribute \$1,000,000 to help offset the costs of remediation. We have already received \$500,000 of these funds, with an additional \$250,000 due in January. The final payment will be made next year. Although this does not cover all the costs the town has or will incur, it does help significantly.

Town staff, boards and committees continue to develop our Fiscal Year 2011 budgets. We are cautiously awaiting the Governor's budget proposal in late January, and we will take any further steps to present a balanced budget at our March 27th annual town meeting. The warrant is open and articles are being reviewed at this time. The Board of Selectmen will vote to close the warrant at their January 26th meeting, with citizen petitions due that day by 2pm.

In an attempt to keep on top

of evolving technology, while also saving precious capital funds, Christopher McClure, our IT Director, has recommended converting our town computers to virtual computers, which will save us significant capital dollars not only next year, but in the future. Our servers are already virtual, and the library public computers have just been converted. Christopher and his staff are continuing to market our permitting software to communities throughout New England, with several contracts already in place. We plan to show off this very exciting product at a state-wide Massachusetts Municipal Association conference in Boston next weekend.

Selectman Valerie Wormell and Finance Committee member Mark Kost continue to meet with boards, committees, staff, and interested residents on identifying possible expense reductions or cost avoidances, by consolidating like-expenses. Whether this evolves into a Department of Public Works or not remains to be seen. A web page is dedicated to this effort, and is available at www.westfordma.gov.

The Board of Selectmen, in collaboration with the Recycling Commission issued a regional Request for Proposals (RFP) with Chelmsford in an attempt to lower solid waste tipping fees. These proposals are due back to the town on January 29th, after which they will be evaluated by a task force, with a recommendation to the selectmen in February.

Please view the pictures of

the construction of the Cameron Senior Center and Town Hall on our website. Both projects are on schedule and continuing nicely.

The Fire Department's transition to an Advanced Life Support department is continuing, with a progress report made by Fire Chief Rochon at the January 12th Board of Selectmen meeting. This is an enormous, exciting endeavor which will greatly improve our delivery of ambulance service for our residents.

Please join me in welcoming two new town employees, Angus Jennings who has accepted the position of Director of Land Use Management, and Jeremy Downs, who will be our Assistant Town Engineer. Both possess many years of valuable, related experience, and we know they will be a tremendous asset to our community.

Many thanks to the Board of Health and town staff who continue to work to protect residents and employees from catching the H1N1 (Swine) Flu. Please note updates on our town's website.

In closing, I would like to thank all employees of the Fire and Police Departments. These outstanding public servants rise to whatever challenge awaits them, and handle all incidents in a professional, effective and courteous manner. Thanks so much to both chiefs and all of the officers and dispatchers for all they do for the town.



Health Department News

Together, we can fight the flu.

This past Sunday (January 10) marked the beginning of the annual observance of National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW). This flu season has presented our community with a unique challenge to fight a new type of influenza -- the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus.

The H1N1 flu is a serious disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that between mid-April and November 14, 2009, 47 million people in the United States were infected with the 2009 H1N1 flu, more than 200,000 people were hospitalized, and over 9,800 people died.

Influenza is unpredictable and we do not know the likelihood of a future wave of H1N1 flu, but we do know that vaccination is the most important step in protecting against influenza. Protect your family and our community by keeping yourself and those close to you healthy; get yourself and your family vaccinated.

Our remaining January public clinics scheduled for Westford residents are as follows:

H1N1 CLINICS FOR GENERAL POPULATION ABOVE 1 YEAR OLD

Date: Thursday January 21, 2010

Time: 4pm-7pm

Location: Millennium School

Walk-in

Date: Tuesday January 26, 2010

Time: By appointment only- Call 978 692-5509 to book

Location: Millennium School

Whether protecting yourself from H1N1 or seasonal flu, please continue to follow the simple, yet effective measures recommended to minimize exposures to the viruses:

- **Get vaccinated!** Flu vaccine is the best defense against the flu. Getting flu vaccine also means that you will not pass the flu to others.
- **Wash your hands and use an alcohol hand sanitizer product often.** This is one of the most effective measures. Teach your family how to properly wash hands
- **Use good cough etiquette (into elbow, not hands)** or cover mouth and nose with tissues when you sneeze or cough. Throw away tissues immediately and wash hands.

**Health Department News**

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- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** This decreases the chance that you will get the flu virus or other germs into your body, or that you will pass the flu to others.
- **Avoid contact with ill persons.** Avoid unnecessary holding, shaking hands, hugging, or kissing anyone who has a cold or the flu. People with young children who have an immune system problem or a chronic illness should avoid large crowds.
- **Disinfect items that you touch frequently such as doorknobs, telephones, etc.**
- **Ensure that personal preparedness plans and kits are up to date,** including food, medications and water supplies for the family.
- **Stay home if ill!** If you have flu symptoms, stay home from work or school and avoid public activities until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducers.
- **Ask your health care provider if you should get pneumococcal vaccine.** You need pneumococcal vaccine (pneumonia shot) if you are 65 years or older, a smoker, or if you have a medical condition like diabetes, asthma, or heart disease.
- **Contact your medical provider if you become ill** to determine if testing and treatment are necessary

Continue to keep updated on additional clinics by logging on to our flu page on www.westfordma.gov and sign up for the department list serve.



Library News

Library Rear Entry Construction Project Begins:

Throughout the month of January, the **Library rear public entrance will undergo re-construction to improve both safety and energy usage:**

- the twenty-two year-old roof overhang will be removed and replaced with an improved roofline
- the cement pad, which has seen deterioration, will be replaced
- the rear window wall and rusted doors will be replaced with an energy-efficient window wall, and
- lighting of the rear entry will be enhanced

Patrons using the rear parking lot or with strollers or wheelchairs will be routed to the Fine Arts Emergency door beginning Wednesday, January 6, 2010. While signs will clearly mark this entrance and egress, patrons can locate this temporary door by orienting themselves towards the three white birches at the rear of the library. While patrons will be temporarily inconvenienced by noise, dust and re-routing, the resulting safety improvements and energy savings for the Library Department should be significant.

The anticipation of a construction project -- replete with tools and yellow trucks -- was so exciting it has inspired a special Construction Storytime! Plan to bring your little ones to this free drop-in Construction-themed Storytime (the January date will be announced) -- and receive your very own yellow hardhat!

Simple Sundays Return:

Beginning January 3, 2010 the J. V. Fletcher Library will be open on Sundays from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. offering seven-day service through April. Spend a **Simple Sunday** afternoon with the family – reading magazines, browsing the bestsellers, choosing a Friday-night video for the entire family or catching up on homework or research.